

Message Text

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SUBJ: IRANIAN/IRAQI AGREEMENT

REF: TEHRAN 1968

1. AT AUDIENCE LATE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 8, THE SHAH BRIEFED ME ON WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED IN ALGIERS DURING HIS NEGOTIATION WITH IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN. THE SHAH'S OBSERVATIONS ARE PUT IN QUOTATION MARKS BELOW FOR CONVENIENCE SINCE THE TEXT WILL CONSTITUTE A REASONABLE APPROXIMATE OF WHAT HE SAID: "BEFORE LEAVING TEHRAN FOR ALGIERS, I RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL BARZANI SAYING THAT IT WAS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE KURDS TO CARRY ON FIGHTING UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES AND THAT HIS PEOPLE WOULD BE MASSACRED UNLESS SOMETHING COULD BE DONE. HE DECLARED THAT THE KURDISH FORCES MUST HAVE MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS AND MORE IRANIAN MILITARY SUPPORT OR THAT THE KURDS BE PERMITTED TO DECLARE THEIR INDEPENDENCE AS CYPRUS DID. I DID NOT SEE HOW WE COULD INCREASE OUR MILITARY COMMITMENT WITHOUT GOING TO OPEN WAR WITH THE IRAQI FORCES. THEN ON MARCH 2 I SAW PRESIDENT SADAT'S ADVISOR, ASHRAF MARWAN, WHO HAD JUST COME FROM BAGHDAD. THIS WAS THE DAY AFTER I LAST SAW YOU (REFTEL. MARWAN REPEATED THE MESSAGE THAT I HAD RECEIVED THROUGH OTHERS, I.E., THAT SADDAM HUSSEIN WAS READY TO PULL IRAQ OUT OF THE SOVIET ORBIT IF IRAN WOULD REMOVE THE MILITARY PRESSURE WHICH WAS FORCING IRAQ INTO THE ARMS OF THE SOVIETS. MARWAN EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IT WAS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT SADDAM WOULD PULL AWAY FROM THE SOVIETS AS PROMISED. I KNEW THAT LATE LAST YEAR THE SOVIETS HAD AGREED TO GIVE THE IRAQIS LARGE

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QUANTITIES OF FORMIDABLE WEAPONS. WHEN I ARRIVED IN ALGIERS,

PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE PUSHED HARD AND WHOWED GREAT INTEREST IN BRINGING ME TOGETHER WITH SADDAM. THE FIRST MEETING WAS UNPRODUCTIVE. SADDAM MOUTHED THE SAME THINGS THE IRAQIS HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR 10 YEARS, AND I SO TOLD BOUMEDIENE. AT THE SECOND MEETING THERE WAS A BIG CHANGE. THE MAIN RESULTS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS. REGARDING THE KURDS, I GOT TWO PROMISES FROM SADDAM: THE FIRST, THAT BARZANI AND HIS PEOPLE WOULD HAVE ONE WEEK TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANTED TO STAY IN IRAQ OR WITHDRAW WITHOUT BLOODSHED INTO IRAN WHERE THEY WOULD FIND A HAVEN AND A DECENT LIFE. THEY WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH FOR THEIR WITHDRAWAL. (IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT THE SHAH MEANS THE END OF THE IRANIAN MONTH WHICH OCCURS ON MARCH 20.) THE SECOND PROMISE WAS THAT THE SECURITY SERVICES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD WORK TOGETHER, BRIEFING EACH OTHER ON WHICH KURDS WERE GOOD AND WHICH WERE BAD (READ COMMUNIST). THIS WILL, I HOPE, PREVENT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNIST KURDISH COMMUNITY IN BARZANI'S TERRITORY. OF COURSE, THE IRAQIS WILL GRANT AMNESTY TO THE KURDS. THEY HAVE ALREADY STOPPED THEIR HOSTILE PROPAGANDA BROADCASTS AGAINST MY COUNTRY. ALL THIS, MIND YOU, WAS AGREED IN FRONT OF BOUMEDINE, AND HE APPROVED IT ALL. HOW IT WILL WORK OUT I OBVIOUSLY DO NOT KNOW. BUT I FELT THAT I HAD TO TAKE THIS CHANCE SINCE OTHERWISE THE KURDISH CAUSE WOULD BE HOPELESS IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, AND I MIGHT BE ACCUSED OF HAVING DESTROYED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GETTING THE IRAQIS OUT OF THE SOVIET ORBIT. IN ANY EVENT, BOUMEDIENE WAS JUBILANT AND ALL THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE OPEC CONFERENCE SEEMED EQUALLY PLEASED. IT MAY ALSO INTEREST YOU TO KNOW THAT SADDAM WANTED TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO BRING ABOUT A REGIONAL SECURITY PACT FOR THE PERSIAN GULF. I VETOED THIS PROPOSAL AS BEING PREMATURE. I MENTION IT ONLY TO INDICATE HOW FAR SADDAM WAS FINALLY PREPARED TO GO IN THESE AGREEMENTS. INCIDENTALLY, GENERAL BARZANI IS STILL IN TEHRAN AND HAS BEEN NOTIFIED OF MY DECISION. I HAVE NOT HEARD FROM HIM WHAT HE HAS DECIDED."

2. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THE SHAH SAID THAT DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS HE AND PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE SPOKE FRENCH WHILE AN INTERPRETER TRANSLATED EVERYTHING INTO ARABIC FOR SADDAM HUSSEIN. WHEN MY EYEBROWS WENT UP, THE SHAH SAID, "SADDAM, BEFORE HE CAME TO POWER, WAS A TERRORIST. HE HAS NO PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND AS FAR AS I KNOW SPEAKS ONLY ARABIC." THE SHAH THEN SMILED AND STATED, "YOU CAN IMAGINE THE THOUGHTS WHICH WERE GOING

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THROUGH MY MIND WHEN I EMBRACED A TERRORIST PUBLICLY BEFORE THE WHOLE OPEC CONFERENCE."

3. THE SHAH NOTED THAT THE IRAQIS HAD ORDERED TROOPS INTO ACTION AGAINST THE KURDS SINCE THE AGREEMENTS WERE MADE. HE SAID HE HAD BROUGHT THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF BOUMEDIENE AS A VIOLATION OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS. HE HAD HAD NO WORD AS TO WHAT EFFECT HIS REMONSTRANCE HAS HAD ON THE IRAQIS.

4. THE SHAH TOOK THIS OCCASION TO PHILOSOPHIZE ABOUT THE PAHLAVI DYNASTY. HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE TWO THINGS FOR WHICH HIS FATHER, REZA SHAH, MIGHT BE CRITICIZED EVEN THOUGH EVERYONE RECOGNIZED HIM AS A GREAT PATRIOT: ONE, HIS HANDLING OF OIL, AND TWO, HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE 1937 TREATY ON THE SHATT AL-ARAB BOUNDARY. "NOW WE HAVE FULLY NATIONALIZED OUR OIL RESOURCES AND HAVE FINALLY SECURED ACCEPTANCE OF THE THALWEG PRINCIPLE TO DEFINE RIVER BOUNDARIES," HE SAID. PUT ANOTHER WAY, THE SHAH IS UNCOMMONLY PLEASED WITH THESE TWO ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PARTICULARLY THE LATTER. (CF TEHRAN 10592).

5. NOT FOR ACTING SECRETARY INGERSOLL: THE ESSENTIAL POINTS IN THE ABOVE MESSAGE WERE PASSED TO THE SECRETARY ON MARCH 8. SAM 86970 (SECTO 59) REACHED ME ON MARCH 9, BECAUSE IT WAS NOT SENT NIACT IMMEDIATE AND THIS EMBASSY IS CLOSED FOR THE WEEKEND FRIDAY AND SATURDAY.
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